

Thun, its Lake and More



The region around the Thuner lake boasts several castles and the city of Thun has its very own bastion dating back to the 12th century. This impressive castle presides over the city on top of a hill right in the middle of town from where you have great views. Inside is an historical museum that includes the largest surviving Swiss banquet hall of the middle ages as well as a hotel and restaurant that serves lunches and dinner.
<https://www.schlosshotelthun.ch/>.

But Thun has more to offer and its most unique feature is the Panorama circular painting. This work was painted by Marquard Wocher in the early 1800s sitting on a roof in the middle of the old town. It is the world's oldest surviving cyclorama and gives a close-up as well as a far-reaching view of Thun's old town and the surrounding lakes and mountains. The display is open from March to November.
<https://www.kunstmuseumthun.ch/en/exhibitions/current/thun-panorama-the-oldest-cyclorama-of-the-world-2566/>).

The Panorama building is in the attractive Schadau Park, a pleasant 10-minute stroll from the railway station along the Aare river towards the lake. The park lies at the very edge of the lake, is laid out as an English estate and has wonderful views out to the Bernese alps. The historic Schadau castle in the park is currently being renovated into a hotel and restaurant which is due to open in June 2019. It will no doubt make a wonderful place to have lunch in the gardens.

The center of Thun is located on the river Aare, just downstream from the lake. The main shopping street, Bälliz, is on a narrow strip of island and connected to the mainland on both sides by quaint wooden and modern bridges. The old town is quirky because its main street, the Obere Hauptgasse, was built on two levels with sidewalks on the roofs of shops housed in the ground floor arcades. It has plenty of interesting boutiques and cafés and is not to be missed.



From the old town you can take a relaxing walk along the Aare and the lake to the Hilterfingen boat station (2 kms) or even the Oberhofen boat station (5 kms) and visit 2 more castles on the way.

The first one, Schloss Hünegg, was built in the style of castles in the French Loire valley. Its interior has been restored and has splendid Jugendstil details. It gives a good impression of life in the early 1900s and is open for visitors from mid-May to mid-October. <https://www.thunerseeschloesser.ch/en/castle-huenegg/>.

The second castle is Schloss Oberhofen which is also open for visitors from mid-May to mid-October. The castle depicts the history of its former owners including servant quarters and an oriental smoking room in its tower with far-reaching views over the lake and mountains. There is also a chapel from the 15th century with impressive murals. The castle park is one of the most magnificent gardens in the alpine region with striking tree formations, colourful flowers, exotic wood plants and covered walkways. <https://www.schlossoberhofen.ch/en/home>

The jetty for the boat back to Thun railway station is right by the Oberhofen castle and boats plough the lake frequently, especially in summer. Of course if walking is not your thing, it will be easy to make the whole journey to either one of these castles by boat. The jetty is right opposite the Thun railway station and the tourist information, also at the railway station, will be able to provide you with information and timetables.

Apart from the city of Thun and its immediate surroundings, the area has much more to offer and you could easily spend a few days. There are plenty of mountains to be hiked and cable cars to take you to wonderful views and lovely mountain restaurants in the Bernese alps. Also the famous Ballenberg open-air museum is nearby giving you a taste of everything Swiss.

If you would like to splash out for an occasion, the romantic Giesbach Grand Hotel is nearby and a fabulous place to stay with luxurious rooms and several up-market restaurants in a grand old-world style. It is about 40kms from Thun and looks out over the Brienz Lake (next to the Thun Lake). It can be reached by the water and from the jetty, a quaint little railway will take you up to the hotel which looks out over the lake and is flanked by an impressive waterfall. It is closed from November until April



<https://www.giessbach.ch/en/home.html>